

# Kentucky Literacy Link

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Rebecca Woosley, editor



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Your questions **and your contributions of ideas/lessons that work** are welcome. E-mail those to [rebecca.woosley@education.ky.gov](mailto:rebecca.woosley@education.ky.gov), and they may be included in this **literacy link** to connect teachers across the state by sharing insights, bright ideas and best

## Items of Interest

### Fall 2010 Community Literacy Conference

Literacy & the Digital Divide:

Best Practices for a Connected Classroom

**When?** November 4, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. ET

**Where?** CARNEGIE CENTER:  
251 West Second St., Lexington

**Cost?** \$75 (includes registration, breakfast, lunch and snacks)

**To register:** Call (859) 254-4175 or visit [www.CarnegieCenterLex.org](http://www.CarnegieCenterLex.org).

### KCTE/LA 75th Anniversary Conference

Teaching Moving Forward/Looking Back – 21st Century and Learning

**When?** February 25 and 26, 2011

**Where?** Marriott – Cincinnati at River Center

To register and receive more complete information, visit <http://conference.kcte.org/>.

### Applications Available after January 1, 2011

#### for The Kentucky Reading Project

New Standards! Assessments! Response to Intervention! Many changes have occurred in Kentucky schools over the past few years. If you're struggling to figure out how it all fits together in a comprehensive literacy approach for your students, we invite you to apply for the Kentucky Reading Project (KRP), a yearlong, graduate-level course in reading instruction that includes a two-week summer institute, four follow-up visits, and a coaching visit by a KRP director. KRP is open to Kentucky public elementary (K-5) teachers.

Each public state university serves as a site for KRP, and only 20 teachers are selected for each site. Teachers who are selected for KRP receive approximately \$200 in books and materials, and the training may be taken for three hours of graduate credit. Updated information will be available on the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development's website ([www.kentuckyliteracy.org](http://www.kentuckyliteracy.org)), and applications will be available after January 1, 2011. You also may contact Cary Pappas at [cary.pappas@uky.edu](mailto:cary.pappas@uky.edu).



## **College and Career Readiness Standards -**

### **A Spotlight on Speaking and Listening**



In her book, *Active Literacy Across the Curriculum*, Heidi Hayes Jacobs says, “When students speak about ideas in a public forum, and when they react to and rattle ideas around, it is an act of ownership and investment.” She continues, “When we hear ourselves out loud and get a response from others, there is the possibility of feedback and engagement.” Communication skills, in all forms, are vital for 21st-century learners. While writing is often what comes to mind when thinking about communication, speaking and listening are critical, sometimes under-taught, communication skills.

Like all the other communication skills, the Kentucky Core Academic Standards for English/Language Arts (KCAS/ ELA), articulate the progression of speaking and listening standards from K-12. A look at those standards will provide some insights as teachers make curriculum and instructional decisions and schools develop policies to guide their writing and communication programs.

There are six College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening.

#### **Comprehension and Collaboration**

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively and orally.

3. Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning and use of evidence and rhetoric.

#### **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**

4. Present information, findings and supporting evidence so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Notice that the speaking and listening standards are divided into two skill categories: Comprehension and Collaboration and Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas. In the past it was not uncommon for teachers to focus only on presentation of knowledge and ideas when thinking about speaking and listening instruction. However, engaging in collaborative discussions, talking about texts and analyzing what a speaker has said are important communication skills for next generation learners in the Comprehension and Collaboration category.

#### **Comprehension and Collaboration**

In order to prepare students for college and careers, they need multiple opportunities in all classes to engage in discourse that broadens and stimulates their thinking. They also need to participate in rich conversations in pairs, in small groups and with the whole class.

As students develop the skills required in by the Comprehension and Collaboration standards, the KCAS/ ELA standards document indicates that students need to be involved in structured conversations that require them “to contribute accurate, relevant information; respond to and develop what others have said; and analyze and synthesize a multitude of ideas in various domains.” In the past, some of these are skills have not been ignored, but they that have been “incidentally” a part of instruction in Kentucky classrooms. The new standards make it clear that these skills now must be an “intentional” part of the instructional focus.

Speaking and Listening skills standard # 1 focuses on students learning to use discussion skills in a range of collaborative situations. Sometimes teachers avoid collaborative learning situations for their students because student behaviors interfere with the desired outcomes. If teachers first teach students how to function effectively in groups, many of the undesirable outcomes can be precluded. Students need to learn the social skills and the collaboration skills that they are expected to use in groups, teams or with partners before they are given opportunities to engage in collaborative discussions.

The March 2010 issue of *Kentucky Literacy Link*, features an article on communication and collaboration. That article includes a suggested lesson sequence to use when preparing students with the requisite group collaboration skills that yield successful outcomes.

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/High+School/English+Language+Arts/Writing/Literacy+Link+Newsletter.htm>

The Comprehension and Collaboration Speaking and Listening standard # 2 requires students to evaluate information presented to them visually or orally from many forms of text. A look at the skill progression from kindergarten to grade 12 reveals the increasing complexity of the expectations as students move from grade to grade. In order for students to develop proficiency with this skill, they need multiple opportunities to practice. As teachers integrate these skills into their lessons and instructional strategies, students will become capable of applying these skills in multiple situations.

Speaking and Listening standard # 3, which is also a part of the Comprehension and Collaboration category, addresses students' listening skills, coupled with their thinking and analytical skills. K-3 students are expected to be able to ask and answer clarifying questions about information from a speaker. Students in grades 4 and 5 must identify reasons and evidence a speaker provides. From grade 6 to 12, students should be able to "delineate" arguments made by a speaker, analyze the support a speaker provides and determine the relevancy and sufficiency of the evidence. By grade 12, students also must analyze the impact a speaker's perspective, word choice, tone and points of emphasis.

Clearly, speaking and listening instruction that focuses on comprehension and collaboration must become a more intentional part of everyday instruction, if Kentucky students are going to be college- and career-ready.

## Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

For K-5 students, the emphasis of Speaking and Listening standards #4 - #6 is on learning to express their ideas clearly and learning to use correct, standard English when speaking. These three standards also require K-5 students to begin to integrate multimedia components into their presentations. For grades 6-12, these three Speaking and Listening standards require that students to be able to present their claims and findings clearly and logically using carefully selected, relevant information. The complexity of the skills increase each year and, by high school, students must learn how to make strategic choices about what to include in a presentation, how to use media displays and what multimedia displays they will integrate into their presentations, and they must be able to adapt their speech for a variety of tasks and contexts.

Again, Kentucky students will not only need instruction to help them develop their presentation skills, but they also will need multiple opportunities, across the curriculum, if they are going to master their presentation skills and demonstrate their critical thinking and creative capabilities at the same time. Heidi Hayes Jacobs challenges teachers to include speaking genre such as podcasts, video conferences, documentary voice-overs, forums, speeches, folklore stories and more as opportunities for students to use speech effectively in academic, professional and personal communications.

## How can teachers maximize students' growth as speakers and listeners?

Regardless of the discipline, the goal of each year of instruction is to maximize student growth. The best way to support that growth is to formatively assess students during the learning process by providing descriptive feedback to guide their growth. This is true for all content and all skills. *Writing Now*, a 2008 policy research brief produced by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), asserts that, "Skill in writing is developed and refined through practice, which means students should have frequent opportunities to ... receive formative assessment ..."

As with writing, the power of formative assessments as students develop their speaking and listening skills comes from several sources: sharing clear criteria with students; providing descriptive feedback that fosters student ownership of the skills; and providing students with multiple, well-chosen instructional models as they practice and develop their speaking and listening skills.

## So what does this mean for Kentucky learners?

Speaking and listening are skills that should not be taught in isolation. They can be easily and seamlessly integrated into content instruction because all of the Speaking and Listening standards in KCAS/ELA place students in active, engaged roles in the classroom. After careful examination of this set of skills, it is clear that students will not be able to master the skills if they are not asked to apply what they are learning. It is no longer enough for students to show what they know; they must be able to show what they can do with what they know.

To download copies of all the standards documents referenced in this article, go to this site:

<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>

### References:

Jacobs, H.H. (2006). *Active Literacy Across the Curriculum: Strategies for Reading Writing Speaking and Listening*. New York: Eye on Education.



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**The ability to engage in argumentation and debate is a measure of an adolescent's growing ability to respond with logical and ethical claims to support or defend a position. In addition, he or she learns to channel appeals to the emotions in ways that are more sophisticated and nuanced. These skills do not emerge easily but take continued practice and feedback.**

Frey, N. & Fisher, D. (2010). *English Journal*. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE.

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## Turning the Page

### Sharing a Literacy Strategy

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### **Text Impressions**

#### **Merging Reading Strategies with Discussion to Improve Comprehension**

Research confirms that good readers know and use common strategies to help them comprehend the texts they read. Good readers use strategies such as activating prior knowledge, inferring and predicting, asking questions, summarizing, visualizing, synthesizing, and monitoring/clarifying for understanding. Research also confirms the need for students to have opportunities to interact with their peers through different types of discussion. One easy and effective way to incorporate strategy use and discussion is through a teaching tool called **Text Impressions**.

**Text Impressions** is a pre-reading activity that you can do with a relatively short piece of text. It challenges students to sort key vocabulary words into categories, then predict what they will read in the passage based on these words. It sets a purpose for reading, creates a sense of anticipation and actively engages students in constructing meaning before, during and after reading. With text impressions, modifications can be made to suit the type of discussion in which you want your students to be engaged.

#### **Text Impressions for Whole Group Discussion**

- The teacher chooses 10 words from the text that hint at the topic of the text.
- The teacher reveals the words to the group one at a time, allowing for discussion/prediction of what the text might be about. As each word is revealed, group discussion centers on how each additional word broadens/narrows the initial prediction.
- This process is continued until all 10 words are revealed, one at a time, and a logical prediction is made about the content of the text.

- After the students read the text, the group revisits the list to clear up any misunderstandings they had or to discuss how the word meanings were broadened or clarified through reading the text.

### Text Impressions for Paired Discussion

This version of Text Impressions moves from a whole group discussion to one in which students discuss with each other their thoughts and predictions about the text they will be reading. **It increases student engagement with the words and provides for a more student-centered discussion.** This is especially important in light of the requirements in the Kentucky Core Academic Standards.

- Identify 10-20 important words or phrases from a chosen text that are associated with the major concept of the text.
- Give students the title of the text and the list of words and phrases from the text. Introduce the words by pronouncing and briefly discussing the words or phrases to make sure all students are familiar with the words. (*Activating Prior Knowledge*)
- Organize students in pairs or small groups and ask them to predict what the text could be about.
- Students sort the words on the list according to which labels they think the words fit most appropriately.
- Then students write a “gist” statement (summarize) that depicts a possible scenario or gist of the text. Students share their predictions before reading the text.

### Text Impressions for Traveling Discussion

**This variation of text impressions provides a learning environment that is even more student-centered,** employing self-discovery and providing students with a means for making connections to the text and discussing those connections with their peers. It also improves student engagement and motivation.

#### Before Reading:

- Choose 10 words from the texts and record the words on index cards.
- Give each student an index card with a word on it. Ask students to think about the word and any *prior knowledge*/experience with the word. Have students

record their thoughts on the back of the index card. Instruct them to begin to make a prediction about the text they will read.

- Allow the students to find a person with a different word. Give students time to discuss their word, sharing predictions and thoughts, and asking questions. Ask students to write their partner’s word on the back of the card and record thoughts regarding what they discussed.
- Find a second person with a different word. Share words, predictions and thoughts. Record thoughts regarding what was discussed.
- Find a third person with a different word. Share words, predictions and thoughts. Record thoughts regarding what was discussed.
- Ask students to return to their seats and revise their predictions about the text before beginning to read.

**During Reading:** Ask students to think about the vocabulary words discussed with the three different students. How do those words appear in the text? How did the conversation about the words enhance their understanding of the text?

**After Reading:** Synthesize. Using the words discussed in the pre-reading activity, have the students write a summary sentence that articulates the point of the text they read. Note: Including this **after reading** activity is a critical part of the learning process. It’s vital to **make time** for this activity and engage students in sharing their summary sentences.

Text Impressions is an effective teaching tool that requires students to activate prior knowledge and allows opportunities to make connections, predict, ask questions, summarize and synthesize information. Adding the speaking and listening component when using the strategy will increase student engagement and improve students’ text comprehension.

More information on the seven strategies and on Text Impressions (referred to as Passage Prediction in the book) can be found in *Power Tools for Adolescent Literacy: Strategies for Learning* by Jan Rozzelle and Carol Searce.

#### References:

Rozzelle, Jan & Carol Searce. (2009) *Power Tools for Adolescent Literacy*. Bloomington, Indiana: Solution Tree Press.

Robb, Laura. (2003) *Teaching Reading in Social Studies, Science, and Math*. New York: Scholastic.





### Check out these links...

Franki Sibberson's September article, *Favorite Blogs: A Great Way to Keep Up with Children's Books*, posted on the Choice Literacy website included references to several useful blog spots shared here.

#### **A Fuse # 7 Production:**

<http://www.fusenum8.blogspot.com>

A children's librarian at one of New York City's libraries posts a "Review of the Day" each day.

#### **Big A Little A:**

<http://kidslitinformation.blogspot.com>

Kelly Herold publishes an online children's literature journal each month. Sibberson says her blog also includes reviews found in various online newspapers and describes this blog as "a wonderful children's literature resource."

#### **Read Roger**

<http://readroger.hbook.com/>

Roger Sutton, *The Horn Book* editor-in-chief, writes this blog, which includes information about books, book awards, authors of books and more.

### Suggested Reading



Gallagher, K. (2009). *Readicide: How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It*. Portland: Stenhouse.

In this book Gallagher defines *readicide* as "the systematic killing of the love of reading," which he says is "often exacerbated by the inane, mind-numbing practices found in schools." He shares some classroom-tested strategies to reverse the damage and to instill in students an interest in reading along with a desire to read.

***Using Your State's Travel Website to Promote Academic Vocabulary*** – an article by Porsche Sims in the Sept. 2010 issue of *English Journal* (126-128).

This article presents a classroom-tested plan for giving ELL learners a vocabulary base of academic and social words. It engages students with using multimedia, PowerPoint and a variety of state website resources to engage them and build their media literacy skills as they build their academic and social skills.

### Contact Us

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